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ABSTRACT

One in a series of ten mini-manuals on office communication proofreading, this booklet for business and office students provides instruction in the use of numbers in written communication. Included are terminal and specific objectives, usage rules and related information, and tasks for practice. A test over the information presented concludes the manual. (Test answers are included in the teacher's manual for the series--CE 008 821.) (BM)

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ONE, TWO, THREE

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An Office Education Mini Curriculum Manual on NUMBERS

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CE 008 828

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What you'll find in this booklet

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THE POINT OF THIS BOOKLET
(i.e., Terminal Objective)

When you are able to show that you know (and can apply) all the rules given in this booklet for writing out or using numerals for numbers – that means, when you've studied the objectives, read the INFO pages carefully, done the TASKS successfully, and gotten at least 85 per cent on the TEST at the end – you'll be able to handle numbers on almost any job you get.

OBJECTIVE
OEM7-2

SPECIFICALLY, WHAT YOU HAVE TO BE ABLE TO DO
(i.e., Specific Objectives)

1. Match given phrases so that they describe the effect of written-out numbers or numbers expressed as numerals.

2. Distinguish among given statements concerning "figure style" which are true and which are not.

3. Distinguish as to the truth or falsity of two given statements concerning "word style."

4. Select from given statements involving numbers at the beginning of a sentence those which are correctly expressed.

5. Choose from given sentences involving two adjacent numbers those which are correctly punctuated.

6. Select from given statements containing number sequences or series those which are correctly handled.

7. Select from given sentences containing numbers referring to age those which are correctly expressed.

8. Select from given sentences containing numbered addresses those which are correctly expressed.

9. Answer two given questions concerning indefinite numbers.

10. Determine the truth or falsity of two given statements concerning ordinal numbers.

11. Choose from given sentences containing dates those in which the numbers are correctly expressed.

12. Choose from given sentences containing times those in which the numbers are correctly expressed.

13. Choose from given sentences containing dollar and cent amounts those in which the numbers are correctly expressed.

14. Determine the truth or falsity of given statements concerning the handling of numbers in fractions, percentages, scores, etc.

15. Determine the truth or falsity of given statements concerning the use of numbers depicting measurements.

16. List three traditional uses of Roman numerals.

one
four

1st THING TO KNOW ABOUT NUMBERS:

Numbers should be numerals only when you want them brief, informal, or emphatic.

Numbers written as numerals (47, 52, 1,000, etc.) are like capital letters; they catch the reader's eye. And they're like abbreviations; they're brief versions of the written-out number. And they look more informal than numbers written as words.

As a result, numbers written as numerals are often used in informal business communications, while numbers written as words are often found in formal communications, especially in legal documents like contracts, letters of agreement, etc.

But there are some more specific rules about how to write numbers – some of which are exceptions to the rule. So read on.

2nd THING TO KNOW ABOUT NUMBERS:
Many use the "figure style"; so learn it.

These are the rules of the "figure style."

1. *Spell out only the numbers from one through ten, whether exact or approximate.* For example:

   Luckily, we have 45 or 50 extra chairs so two people use chairs as desks.

   Somehow, 13 people have developed back problems.

   NOTE: Some organizations, at least in sales letters and interoffice correspondence, use numerals even for the numbers one through ten.

2. *If you have a series of related numbers, write them all out if most are below eleven. But, if most are above ten, use figures for all.* For example:

   She has three aunts, seven uncles, and nineteen cousins.

   The children petted 21 sheep, 16 horses, and 2 ostriches.

3. *If there are just as many numbers above or below ten, use your own judgment.*

4. *Numbers in the millions or above should be expressed in a mixed style (part figure, part word).* For example:

   I inherited 32 million Pontiac bumpers last Thursday (not 32,000,000)

   Only 14.2 million Pontiacs were sold with that bumper. My three engineer friends are trying to devise a use for 20 million lonely bumpers.

   So far they have suggested 3.7 billion ideas, none of them workable.

5. *But again, treat related numbers alike.* For example:

   Last year they made 721,577,000 suggestions; this year, nearly 3,000,000,000 (not 3 billion).

3rd THING TO KNOW ABOUT NUMBERS:
But many others use the "word style"; so learn it, too.

Here are the rules for the "word style."

1. *Spell out all numbers that can be expressed in one or two words.*

   Since a hyphenated number (like *forty-six*, or *ninety-one*) is regarded as one word, this style really means. *"Write out all numbers from one through one hundred* AND *all round numbers (like two million or fifty-six thousand) above one hundred."*

2. *Again, when two or more sets of numbers are related, use the same style for each set.* For example:

   We sent out four hundred sales letters, five thousand brochures, and one hundred twenty-five pamphlets. OR,

   On Thursday we had 450 customers; on Friday, 580; and on Saturday, 1,000.

3. *Use the shortest form when writing out large round numbers.* For example:

   seventeen hundred; NOT *one thousand seven hundred.*

NOTE: Whichever style your organization prefers, follow the guidelines throughout the rest of this manual – even if they seem to contradict the first three things discussed earlier.

4th THING TO KNOW ABOUT NUMBERS:

Always write out a number at the beginning of a sentence.

Write out related numbers, too. For example:

Forty or fifty (not forty or 50) *people were hurt in the earthquake.*

If the numbers are large enough to need more than two words (or if figures are desired for emphasis), change the sentence so it doesn't begin with numbers.

For example, change

Three hundred fifty-one chances were sold by the club.

to

The club sold 351 chances.

5th THING TO KNOW ABOUT NUMBERS:

If two numbers occur together in a sentence, both in numerals or both in words, use a comma to separate them.

These need commas:

In 1974, 372 people were suspended from membership.

Of the first ten, six went to court.

This one doesn't (because one number is in numerals and the other is written out):

On October 27 four verdicts were reached.

If one of these "together numbers" is part of a compound modifier (like *ten-ton* bridge or *75-page* document), write out one and use numerals for the other – usually the first number is the one written out, unless the second would result in a shorter word.

Like this:

five 7-room homes

three 75-page booklets

Or this:

505 seven-room homes

150 five-dollar bills

But not this:

Five hundred five 7-room homes

One hundred fifty 5-dollar bills

6th THING TO KNOW ABOUT NUMBERS:

Use commas, hyphens, or words to separate numbers in a sequence or series.

If the series *is not* a continuous one, use commas.

Like this: *He went bankrupt in 1929, 1939, and 1957.* OR
See the jokes on pages 1, 7, 33, and 151.

If the series *is* a continuous one (a sequence), use hyphen or words (such as "to" or "through").

Like this: *Read the articles on pages 18 through 39.* OR
Read the articles on pages 18-39.

But if the sequence is introduced by from or between, use words (such as "to," "and," "through") – not hyphens. Like this: *From 1941 to 1945 my grandfather was at war.*
Between 1945 and 1950 he attended college.

In sequences of years or page numbers joined by hyphens, the second number can often be abbreviated. Like this: *1970-1975* OR *1970-75*
pages 1105-1115 OR *1105-15*

Do not abbreviate the second number if the first ends in two or more zeroes or if it begins with different numerals. AVOID SUCH STUPID THINGS AS:

1800-15 pages 100-1
1890-03 pages 997-07

And DON'T abbreviate the second number if it's under 100.

7th THING TO KNOW ABOUT NUMBERS:
Generally, write out numbers referring to ages and anniversaries.

For example:

She was twenty-one last May.
It was their third anniversary.
Their two-year-old son helped them celebrate.
Her mother is in her mid-forties.

But use figures when ages or anniversaries are used as statistics (as in news releases, personal data sheets, or documents dealing with insurance, retirement plans, etc.).

Express ages in figures when they include years, months, and days:

I am now 22 years 3 months and 2 days old.

(NOTE: lack of commas; the AND could have been omitted, too.)

8th THING TO KNOW ABOUT NUMBERS:

Most numerical parts of addresses should be written in numerals.

Like this:

4830 South 53rd Street
777 49 Place, N.W.

Numbered street names are written out if they are in the one-through-ten groups.

4830 South Tenth Street
777 Third Street, N.W.

Use numerals for house (or building) numbers except in the case of "one." Like this:

4830 Park Avenue
210 Somerset Street
7 Lincoln Boulevard

BUT: *One Parsifal Place*

Write zip codes in numerals (no commas) and separated from the state by two spaces and no comma.

9th THING TO KNOW ABOUT NUMBERS:
Write out indefinite numbers.

An indefinite number is just what it says: indefinite, like *tens, hundreds, thousands, several thousand, a few million,* etc.

Use:

hundreds of airplanes

NOT *100's of airplanes.*

Use:

a few hundred cattle
several thousand hogs
many millions of bushels

10th THING TO KNOW ABOUT NUMBERS:

Write out ordinals that can be expressed in one or two words.

Ordinal numbers are numbers like *first, second, third,* etc. Numbers like *1, 2, 3,* or *one, two, three* are cardinal numbers.

For example:

My *ten thousandth* phone call came today, late in the *twentieth* century.
I was taking my *fifth* bath at the time.

11th THING TO KNOW ABOUT NUMBERS:

In sentences, date numbers may be in numerals, words, or expressed as cardinals or ordinals, depending...

When the date comes *before* the month or *stands alone,* use *ordinal* numbers. You can write them out like this:

I was engaged on the third of June and married on the eleventh.

Or use ordinals with numerals like this:

I met him on the 5th of June and left him forever on the 20th.

BUT when the date *follows* the month, use *cardinal* numbers.

June 3, 1976.

Express complete dates in month-day-year order:

January 5, 1949.

(Military usage is more logical; it gives dates from smallest to largest:

5 January 1949; note the lack of comma.)

Note proper usage of B.C. (Before Christ) and A.D. (anno Domini):

In 500 B.C., Greece would have been an exciting place.

The Magna Carta was signed A.D. 1215.

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INFO
OEM7-16

12th THING TO KNOW ABOUT NUMBERS:

Use numerals for time, plus a.m., p.m., noon, or midnight; words otherwise.

Examples with a.m. or p.m.:

I arrived at the dock at 11 p.m.
The ship sailed at 12:30 a.m.
The ballroom was open from 9:00 p.m. to 1:30 a.m.

(NOTE: Use zeroes for minutes only when other times in the same sentence use minutes.)

Examples with *noon* or *midnight:*

I stopped dancing at midnight.
The office will close at 12 noon.
The band played from 9 p.m. to 12 midnight.

(NOTE: Use the numeral with midnight when other times are expressed in numerals.)

With *o'clock,* use numerals for emphasis; words for formality.

6 o'clock OR *six o'clock*
half after six o'clock OR *half past six o'clock* (not six-thirty o'clock)

When *a.m., p.m.* or *o'clock* are not used, write out the hour. For example:

Expect me at eight tonight.

When hour and minutes are given alone, either write them out or convert to all numerals. Such as:

ten after one OR *1:10*
twenty of six OR *5:40*
half past nine OR *nine-thirty* OR *9:30*
nine-nineteen OR *9:19*

13th THING TO KNOW ABOUT NUMBERS:

Generally, use figures to express amounts of money.

For example:

I had $15, but I owed Ray $9.75.
I think I'd be in debt even if I made over $1,000 a week.

Note that in a *sentence*, a decimal point and zeroes are *not* used with whole dollar amounts. In a *tabulation*, however, *do* use decimal point and zeroes if any of the other amounts in the listing contain cents. Like this:

Like this:	Not this:
$15.00	*$15*
23.25	*23.25*
19.00	*19*

Write out indefinite amounts like: *a few billion dollars, many hundreds of dollars.*

Round amounts of money over a million can be expressed in a mixed style (figures and words).

$21 million OR *21 million dollars*
$10.5 billion OR *10.5 billion dollars*
$9.75 million OR *9.75 million dollars*
$9-3/4 million OR *9-3/4 million dollars*

13th THING, Cont.

Be consistent in writing related amounts.

Like this: *$300,000 to $1,000,000* Not this: *$300,000 to $1 million*

Repeat the word (*million* or *billion* or whatever) to avoid confusion. For example:

I'd like to inherit $5 to $10 million.

That's confusing. Would inheriting $6 fulfill your wishes? Make it *$5 million to $10 million.*

Don't use a mixed style for fractional expressions of large amounts of money. Write them out completely or use figures.

Like this: *half a million dollars* OR *$500,000* Not this: *1/2 of a million dollars* OR *$1/2 million*

For amounts under a dollar, use numerals and the word (The numbers from 1 through 10 are often spelled out.)

When using a symbol (like $) with several amounts, use the symbol with each amount. Like this:

$50 to $100 OR *$1 million to $5 million*

But if the word is written out, use it only with the last amount. Like this:

10 to 35 cents OR *1 to 5 dollars*

14th THING TO KNOW ABOUT NUMBERS

Generally, use numerals for many other forms.

Use numerals for fractions, decimals, percentages, ratios, proportions, scores, voting results, serial numbers, telephone numbers, and the like. Here is an example of each (and exceptions, if any):

- *Her score was 3-1/2 times higher than his.* (Do not begin a sentence with such a fraction – write it out or change the order of the sentence.)
- *A two-thirds majority passed the law.* (A fraction standing by itself, without a whole number in front of it, is usually written out unless it would be long and awkward. In that case, change the order of the sentence.)
- *The interest rate has risen from 6-7/8 to 7-1/2 per cent.* (In the same sentence, don't mix fractions typed with a diagonal and fractions – like ¼ and ½ – which appear on the typewriter.)
- *3.1075259 feet; 4,005.9134 kilograms* (don't use commas in the decimal part of a number.)
- *0.32 metre; .02 gram* (When there is no whole number in front of the decimal, insert a zero unless the decimal itself begins with a zero. Exceptions: *a .38 Police Special; a .22 caliber rifle)*
- *I'd like a 15 per cent pay raise, please. He gave me a 10 per cent discount.* (Spell out the word per cent [in two words] except in tabulations, interoffice memos, or technical documents; in those cases, use %.)
- *One-half of 1 per cent or 0.5 per cent* (Write out or convert to decimals fractional amounts under 1 per cent.)

14th THING, Cont.

- *10-1/2 per cent or 10.5 per cent.*
- *Prices are reduced from 15 to 30 per cent* (Use *per cent* after the last figure only, but a % would appear after each number.
- *The class had a 3:1 (or 3 to 1) ratio of boys to girls.*
- *The odds are 7 to 5 against our winning.*
- *He had a 50-50 chance of survival.*
- *The final score: Los Angeles 9, Dallas 8.*
- *The legislature passed the measure by a vote of 19 to 7.*
- *The policy number is AR7073591.*
- *Call (505) 281-3338 for repairs.*
- *Where is Invoice 015329?*

15th THING TO KNOW ABOUT NUMBERS:
Measurements and quantities are usually given in numerals.

The exception: If an isolated reference to a measurement has no real technical significance, write the number out. For example:

We took a thirty-mile drive last Sunday.

But *do* use figures for most measurements and quantities. Some examples:

The temperature reached 115 degrees.
His office is 12 by 14 feet.
The punch bowl will hold 14 litres.
The load weighed 315 pounds 10 ounces.
She is 6 feet 1 inch tall.

(Note lack of commas in these last two examples.)

16th THING TO KNOW ABOUT NUMBERS:
Roman numerals have certain traditional uses.

Roman numerals are often used for *volume, chapter,* or *section* headings of a book, or series of books (or laws), for *main topics* in outlines, for *dates* on public buildings, for *copyright notices* in movies, for *certain names,* and (in lower case) for *numbering introductory material* in a book. Here is an example of each:

- *Volume XII of the Encyclopedia Americana is missing.*
- *Study Chapter VII of the test.*
- *Section CLVI, Part 93, of the Housing Code deals with foreclosures.*
- *I. Pets*
  A. Dogs
  B. Peacocks
  II. Work Animals
  (etc.)
- *State Prison*
  MCMLXXV
- *Toenails in the Sand; Copyright MCMLXI*
  Donald E. Graham II (The *II* means Graham is named after a relative but not after his father – it would be Jr. in that case.)
- *The preface is on pages iii through xvi. Chapter X is on pages 45-62.*

Tasks for Practice

TASK 1 – Correct any references to numbers that need correction. (Use "figure style" from the 2nd THING section.)

On May eight thirteen of us headed out on a 2000-mile trip across 7 states in a six foot by twenty foot van with 98005 miles on the odometer. Among us, we had a hundred fifty seven dollars and 19 cents.

During the first 9 miles, we passed 17 cars, 15 pickups, and one bus. Then the water temperature climbed above two hundred twenty degrees, and we slowed to forty miles per hour.

Sue was in charge of the radio. She kept it tuned to a station that told us about the national debt: "Each man, woman, and child in the country owes $1.2 million on the debt: Next year we'll go 2,000,000 dollars further into debt." We abandoned Sue in Tulsa.

Twenty or 30 times we stopped to help out stranded motorists. 19 of them paid us for helping. Of the 19 five gave us checks. 1 man gave us a twenty-dollar bill which he removed from a wad of 103 20-dollar bills.

We had flat tires on May 11, 19, and 24. But from May 25-31, we had no problems. On May 30, we celebrated George's 25th birthday with 11 steaks and 15 ice cream cones (George ate 3, and he gained 2 pounds).

TASK 1, Cont.

Then we pulled up at 1 San Ysidro Street in Denver. It was my cousin's house, but she didn't seem happy to see us and our dirty laundry – and bodies. So we left at 4:30 o'clock and covered 100's of miles that night. On the seventh of June we arrived in Yellowstone at 12 noon. We then spent $15.00 on postcards and $9.25 on milkshakes. I think we could have spent $2 to $30 million on postcards and camera film.

Then we had an argument. About 1/2 the group wanted to go to Portland, 1/4 preferred San Francisco, the rest wouldn't state their preferences. So we voted. San Francisco won: seven to five.

We crossed the desert in one-hundred-degree heat. But we made it. 16 months later we were ready to go home.

The Test

For Objective 1 – Match:

_____ a. like capital letters
_____ b. formal
_____ c. like abbreviations
_____ d. emphatic
_____ e. less emphatic
_____ f. briefer

(1) Written out numbers
(2) Numbers as numerals

For Objective 2 – True or False

_____ a. In "figure style" write out the numbers from 1 through 100.
_____ b. In "figure style" use numbers for 1 through 9.
_____ c. This sentence is good "figure style" usage: He has three stereos, five telephones, and twenty radios.
_____ d. Use a mixed style for numbers in the millions or above.

For Objective 3 – True or False

_____ a. Write out numbers that can be expressed in one or two words.
_____ b. A hyphenated number is regarded as one word.

For Objective 4 – Check the sentences which are correct.

_____ a. 53 people tried out for the play.
_____ b. Fifteen couldn't even read a part.
_____ c. Twenty or 25 people didn't know the play at all.

For Objective 5 – Check the sentences that need commas between the numbers:

____ a. Out of the first 21 20 were wrong.
____ b. On May 3 five students graduated.
____ c. In the last three two were chosen.
____ d. We looked at five hundred thirty-seven 9-room houses.
____ e. We could afford 13 nine-room houses.

For Objective 6 – Check the sentences which contain correctly handled number sequences or series.

____ a. Read pages 80-1.
____ b. Read pages 39-42.
____ c. Read from page 39-42.
____ d. Read pages 39, 47, and 83.
____ e. That war lasted from 1891-1903.
____ f. During the 1900-07 period, drought occurred.

For Objective 7 – Check the correct sentences:

____ a. He was 93 last August.
____ b. Helen Richards, 28, was promoted to manager last week (press release)
____ c. At age 65, the insurance policy lapses.
____ d. He is 4 years 11 months and 29 days old.

For Objective 8 – Check the correct addresses:

____ a. 3130 South 7th Street
____ b. 23 Romero Avenue
____ c. One State Street
____ d. 13 West 11th Street

For Objective 9 – Answer the following:

Provide two examples of indefinite numbers:

Should they be written out or given as numerals?

For Objective 10 – True or False?

____ a. Write out ordinal numbers that can be expressed in one or two words.
____ b. These are ordinal numbers: third twentieth, first.

For Objective 11 – Check the correct sentences:

____ a. He was sentenced on the tenth of June and entered prison on the twelfth.
____ b. He escaped July 5th and again on the 8th.
____ c. He's up for parole on January 2, 1997.
____ d. Since August 5, he's been a model prisoner.

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For Objective 12 – Check the correct sentences:

_____ a. I noticed he was missing at 10:00 p.m.
_____ b. I searched for him from 10:30 to 11:00 p.m.
_____ c. I turned in the alarm at 12 midnight.
_____ d. By eight-thirty o'clock I had been fired.
_____ e. Before eight tonight I will leave home.

For Objective 13 – Check the correct sentences:

_____ a. I like that $10.00 shirt, but I have only $8.50.
_____ b. Most things I want cost 100's of dollars.
_____ c. The new contract will cost the city $10 million to $20 million.
_____ d. I'd like to have 49 cents for ice cream.
_____ e. Any amount between 1 and 100 dollars would be fine.
_____ f. Of course, 1/2 a million dollars would be better.

For Objective 14 – True or False

_____ a. Most fractions, decimals, percentages, scores and the like should be in numerals.
_____ b. A fraction standing alone is usually written out.
_____ c. After a decimal point, arrange the numbers in groups of three with commas between groups.
_____ d. In formal letters, use "per cent" rather than "%."

For Objective 15 – True or False

_____ a. Use figures for most measurements and quantities.
_____ b. Begin sentences with numerals if possible.

For Objective 16 – List three different traditional areas in which Roman numerals are used.